

Subject: re Roma support.

Date: Sun, 21 Oct 2001 12:51:54 EDT
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HI Gratton this a report from todays Beds on sunday newspaper,

AID PACKAGE: FOREIGN TRAVELLERS OFFERED ADVICE AND SUPPORT.

GYPSIES TO HELP ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Gypsies at Hatch have offered to help foreign Travellers who find themselves in the proposed Yarls Wood detention centre at Clapham.

Locals say they can offer a range of help including translation advice and support when the centre opens. The Gipsies who refer to themselves as Roma, are currently fighting legal by Mid Beds district Council to evict them from the land they occupy without planning permission in Hatch.

Now they have formed an action group to help other Travellers in similar situations, including Refugee Gypsies. Last month Bulgarian Gipsies, who are seeking asylum in Birmingham, joined the Hatch Gypsies at a demonstration against their planned eviction at the Mid Beds Council offices.

One of the Bulgarian Gipsies Toma Nikoaleff, had been forced to flee his home after a bomb was left on his families doorstep.

Hatch spokeswoman Janie Codona said we would like to help any Roma finding themselves at the centre. We can translate for them if they'd like to send letters or read in Romanes, Czech Romanian, Bulgarian, or Polish. Individuals may be isolated there because of language barriers.

NOTICE

Women from the site are willing to go and chat to the women at the centre if there are any problems and we have we have volunteers to go and offer comfort, as well as material things.

Janies husband, Clifford said we have put up a notice at the asylum centre at Oakington in Cambridgeshire and hope to do the same at Yarls Wood.

It must be very lonely for Roma at the centre with no one to talk to and maybe no similar cultures there.